DC BLACK LABEL

SEAN MURPHY WITH MATT HOLLINGSWORTH

BATMAN™

CURSE OF THE WHITE KNIGHT

BOOK SIX

BATMAN
CURSE OF THE
WHITE KNIGHT
BOOK SIX

THEY SERIOUSLY LET YOU WALK THROUGH THE FRONT DOOR JUST BECAUSE YOU WERE DRESSED LIKE ***CYBER-METAL BATMAN?***

DIDN'T EVEN ***RAISE AN EYEBROW,*** HUH?

OH.

I SEE YOU BROUGHT WILLOW UFGOOD WITH YOU.

YOU DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME--I DISABLED THE ALARM AND JAMMED THEIR PHONES, BUT I CAN'T STOP THEM FROM BREAKING DOWN THE DOOR.

WE CAN MANAGE.

BE CAREFUL--THIS GUN IS A ***CLASSIC!***

SHOVE!

LITTLE SURPRISED TO SEE YOU HELPING, JERVIS--

NO HARD FEELINGS ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED LAST YEAR WITH CLAYFACE AND ***WHAT'S-HER-FACE?***

HER NAME IS ***MARIAN DREWS!***

AH-- SO ***THAT'S*** WHY YOU'RE HERE.

DON'T WAIT FOR US--WE'LL FIND OUR OWN RABBIT HOLE.

HATTER, WAIT.

TELL HER JOKER SAYS ***HELLO.***

AND THAT WHEN YOU DRINK TOO MUCH FROM A BOTTLE MARKED "POISON," IT'S CERTAIN TO DISAGREE WITH YOU SOONER OR LATER.

DON'T YOU ***DARE*** QUOTE LEWIS CARROLL TO ME!

ON THREE...

...TWO... ONE...

SHUK SHUK SHUK SHUK

BRAAAAAKKK

"I CAN TELL WHEN YOU'RE ***LYING,*** HARLEY."

VROOM

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

YOU'RE KEEPING SOMETHING FROM ME--SOMETHING JACK SAID.

YOU DON'T *TRUST* ME?

I *DO* TRUST YOU. SO I'M HOPING YOU HAVE A GOOD REASON.

OR MAYBE THERE'S NOTHING AND YOU'RE JUST BEING *PARANOID.*

Toss

TAKE THE KEYS AND DRIVE STRAIGHT TO THE GTO. WAIT THERE UNTIL I ARRIVE.

BUT I WANT TO GO TO THE CHAPEL *WITH* YOU!

WE STILL DON'T KNOW WHERE AZRAEL IS--THE GTO IS THE *SAFEST PLACE* FOR YOU.

BATMAN--

WHAT?

...

THANKS FOR TRUSTING ME.

AND BE CAREFUL!

VROOM

Sean Murphy: Script, Art, Covers
Matt Hollingsworth: Colors & Cover Colors
AndWorld Design: Letters

BATMAN
CURSE OF THE WHITE KNIGHT

BOOK SIX

Batman created by Bob Kane with Bill Finger

--WHY'D YOU CALL ME OUT TO A FIRE?

POLICE FOUND TWO BODIES.

SO LET *THEM* HANDLE IT--THE GTO HAS MORE IMPORTANT--

THE FIRST BODY IS *BANE.*

WHAT?!

SOMEONE TOOK HIS HEAD OFF.

OH MY GOD. AND THE SECOND BODY?

RUTH REDFORD.

SO WE FINALLY UNCOVERED THE ELUSIVE *RUTH.*

GIANT FIRE, DECAPITATION--DEFINITELY AZRAEL'S M.O.

WONDER WHY THEY TURNED ON EACH OTHER.

DON'T KNOW YET, BUT CHECK THIS OUT...

HER HARD DRIVE MANAGED TO SURVIVE THE FIRE. FOUND SOME INTERESTING FILES ON IT, INCLUDING BLUEPRINTS FOR A *MECHANIZED BAT-SUIT* THAT AZRAEL STOLE.

FANTASTIC--AND HERE I WAS WORRIED THIS WOULD BE *TOO EASY.*

ALSO HAS A LIST OF HER CLIENTS.

THE NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF *ALL* THE *ELITES.*

SEE ANYONE WE KNOW?

OH JESUS...

"WHERE'S AZRAEL?"

I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM SINCE ***THE JOKER*** GOT TO HIM.

AND WHY SHOULD I BELIEVE YOU?

IF I KNEW, I'D TELL YOU, ***BRUCE.***

JEAN-PAUL IS VERY DANGEROUS AND HE NEEDS TO BE STOPPED.

WHO ARE YOU?

I'M A KNIGHT OF THE ORDER OF ST. DUMAS--A HISTORIAN AND A COLLECTOR.

WHEN I LEARNED THE JOKER FOUND THE JOURNAL, I KNEW I HAD TO TAKE IT FROM HIM. I FEARED HE WOULD USE IT TO EXPOSE THE TRUTH ABOUT GOTHAM'S ***CURSE,*** AND I COULDN'T LET HIM DISRUPT THE PEACE YOUR FAMILY CREATED.

BUT I FAILED. AND NOW JEAN-PAUL IS ON THE ***WARPATH.***

YOU HAVE NO ***CONTROL*** OVER HIM?

NOT ANYMORE. NOT AFTER HE LEARNED THAT WE'VE BEEN LYING TO HIS FAMILY FOR ***CENTURIES.***

HOW LONG HAVE YOU KNOWN HIM?

SINCE HE WAS A CHILD. I TAUGHT HIM WHAT IT REALLY MEANT TO BE A KNIGHT--THAT EVERY WARRIOR MUST FIND ***BALANCE,*** AND THAT YOU CAN'T KNOW ***VIOLENCE*** UNLESS YOU KNOW ***PEACE.***

BUT AS HE GREW OLDER HE BECAME ANGRY, RESTLESS, AND UNCONTROLLABLE--I COULDN'T TAME HIM.

SO THE ORDER DID WHAT WE THOUGHT WAS BEST--WE SENT HIM TO ***WAR.***

TO MAKE HIM EVEN ***MORE*** DANGEROUS?

I PRAYED THE BATTLEFIELDS WOULD QUENCH HIS BLOODLUST AND HE'D COME HOME HAVING SHED HIS DEMONS.

BUT THE JOKER DESTROYED ALL THAT BY REIGNITING THE ***BLOOD FEUD.*** AND SOON THE ENTIRE CITY WILL KNOW THE ***TRUTH.***

I ALREADY KNOW YOUR BIG SECRET, AND ***I DON'T CARE***--ALL I WANT IS AZRAEL.

YOU ALREADY KNOW THE TRUTH ABOUT THE WAYNES?

EDMOND DIDN'T WANT TO SHARE HIS INHERITANCE. SO HE KILLED BAKKAR.

THEN HE FLOODED THE VALLEY AND DESTROYED THE VILLAGE SO HE COULD REBUILD HIS FORTUNE.

IS THAT WHAT YOU THINK?

I'M NOT PROUD OF WHAT MY FAMILY DID, BUT I CAN'T UNDO THREE HUNDRED YEARS OF HISTORY. AND I WON'T TURN HALF OF GOTHAM OVER TO A ***MANIAC.***

THERE'S MORE TO THE STORY THAN WHAT'S IN THE JOURNAL.

THE ORDER OF ST. DUMAS HAD SENT BAKKAR TO GOTHAM ON A QUEST TO BRING ***PEACE*** TO THE VALLEY. TO SAVE THE LOST SOULS BY TEACHING THEM THE WORD OF GOD.

BUT RATHER THAN CONVERT THE SINNERS, HE ***JOINED*** THEM.

SO WE ***BANISHED*** HIM FROM THE ORDER.

"BUT BAKKAR WOULDN'T GO QUIETLY. HE WANTED VENGEANCE.

"HE WANTED TO SEIZE POWER BY FINDING THE ***LAST WAYNE.***

"ONCE THEY ARRIVED HERE, BAKKAR SET HIS PLAN INTO MOTION.

"IN ORDER TO OVERTHROW THE CRIMINAL EMPIRE OF GOTHAM, BAKKAR INSISTED THEY POSE AS CRIMINALS THEMSELVES.

"THEY BECAME THIEVES AND SMUGGLERS, GETTING TO KNOW EVERY PIRATE AND KIDNAPPER WHO PASSED THROUGH GOTHAM.

"THEY STUDIED THEM, LEARNED THEIR WEAKNESSES...

"...AND GOT CLOSE WITH THEM.

"IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE EDMOND FELL UNDER GOTHAM'S SPELL. THAT'S WHAT THIS VALLEY DOES TO PEOPLE--IT ***SEDUCES*** THEM.

"FOR TWO YEARS, BAKKAR WAITED--BIDING HIS TIME AND ALLOWING EDMOND'S HEART TO BECOME AS DARK AS THE MEN THEY SWORE TO OVERTHROW.

"ONCE EDMOND'S TRANSFORMATION WAS COMPLETE, THERE WAS ONLY ONE THING LEFT FOR BAKKAR TO DO..."

"...TURN HIM INTO *A KILLER.*

"IT WAS THE ONLY WAY TO RECLAIM GOTHAM--BY *ELIMINATING* EVERYONE WHO STOOD IN THEIR WAY.

"THEY STARTED AT THE DOCKS AND WORKED THEIR WAY UP TO THE HIGHEST CLIFF--THE HOME OF *LAFFY ARKHAM...*

"...THE *VAMPIRE OF GOTHAM VALLEY.*

SHUNK

"WITH LAFAYETTE GONE, THE TWO MEN WERE SUPPOSED TO DIVIDE THE VALLEY IN HALF..."

...BUT BAKKAR HAD *OTHER* PLANS.

SO EDMOND DIDN'T KILL BAKKAR IN COLD BLOOD-- HE WAS JUST *DEFENDING HIMSELF?*

I WON'T GIVE YOU ALL THE ANSWERS, BRUCE. ALL I CAN TELL YOU IS THIS...

...I BELIEVE GOD HAS A PATH FOR EVERYONE, AND IT'S UP TO EACH OF US TO DISCOVER OUR *OWN* TRUTHS.

BATMAN, COME IN! AZRAEL BROKE JOKER OUT OF PRISON-- THEY'RE ATTACKING THE GTO!

ON MY WAY!

GO--YOU HAVE EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW. *FOR NOW.*

WHO ARE YOU?

MY NAME IS JASON BLOOD. AND I'VE BEEN IN THIS VALLEY A LONG TIME.

HOW DO YOU KNOW ALL THIS?

LET'S JUST SAY I HAVE EXPERIENCE WITH *CURSES.*

VROOO

WHAT HAPPENED?

...AZRAEL... NO WARNING...

HE AND JOKER KILLED OVER A *DOZEN* INMATES AT NEW ARKHAM.

THEN THEY CAME HERE--HIT US WITH RPGS BEFORE BREAKING THROUGH SECURITY. AZRAEL PINNED US DOWN WHILE JOKER *SNATCHED THE TWINS.*

I MANAGED TO DROP GABRIEL BEFORE THE BUILDING COLLAPSED.

WHERE'S HARLEY?

...COUGH... COUGH...

MEDIC!

TRY TO *BREATHE.*

...HE TOOK THEM...HE TOOK MY BABIES...

JACK WAS SUPPOSED TO STOP HIM--SAID HE WOULDN'T LET THIS HAPPEN!

BROKEN RIBS--LIE DOWN AND LET--

I DON'T WANT TO LIE DOWN--*I WANT TO GET MY CHILDREN BACK!*

I'LL FIND THEM, HARLEY--

I'M COMING *WITH* YOU!

NO! YOU NEED MEDICAL--

DON'T ARGUE WITH ME, BATMAN--THIS IS ALL ***YOUR*** FAULT!

WHAT?!

YOU THINK I WANTED TO PUT UP WITH MORE OF JOKER'S ***HUMILIATING ABUSE?***

TO BE REMINDED HOW STUPID AND ***BLIND*** I WAS FOR ALL THOSE YEARS?

YOU THINK I WANTED TO RISK ***EXPOSING*** MY ***CHILDREN*** TO HIM? ***NO!***

BUT YOU SHOWED UP LOOKING FOR MY HELP--SO I GAVE IT. ***KNOW WHY?***

BECAUSE ***I CARE ABOUT YOU!***

MAYBE BECAUSE I LIKE LEATHER MASKS, OR MAYBE I GOT A THING FOR SCREWED-UP MEN--

--ALL I KNOW IS I DID WHATEVER YOU ASKED ***AND IT COST ME EVERYTHING!***

I AIN'T **ASKING** YOU ANYTHING-- ***I'M TELLING YOU.***

TAKE ME TO ARKHAM AND HELP ME GET MY BABIES BACK!

SUIT UP.

THE BAT-SIGNAL?

AZRAEL. IT'S COMING FROM ***OLD ARKHAM.***

WE'LL BE RIGHT BEHIND YOU.

GTO

VROOOO

OH MY GOD OH MY GOD OH MY GOD.

I HOPE THEY'RE OKAY.

HE NEEDS THEM ALIVE IN ORDER TO LURE US INTO HIS *TRAP...*

...SO WHEN WE FIND THEM, ***DON'T*** RUSH IN.

HE WANTS ME DEAD, DOESN'T HE?

YES. IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO GET RID OF NAPIER--BY ELIMINATING YOU AND THE TWINS, JACK WILL HAVE NO ***REASON*** TO LIVE.

BATMAN!

SHUK

GTO

SHUK

WATCH OUT!

SHUK

SHUK

SMOKE

POP

FOOF!

TRACKING MODE

WEAPONS.....

SEARCHING...

TINK

DANGER!

SHIT.

FLASH GRENADE 44%

WHUD

"JACK, I KNOW YOU CAN HEAR ME..."

...HE WANTS TO *MURDER* OUR *CHILDREN,* JACK! WE NEED TO FIGHT HIM *TOGETHER.*

THIS ISN'T ABOUT JACK. IT'S ABOUT *YOU* AND *ME.*

THERE IS NO YOU AND ME, *JOKER.*

THIS PART OF ARKHAM HAS SPECIAL MEANING FOR ME-- IT'S WHERE I FIRST MET *HARLEEN QUINZEL.*

A VIRTUOUS YOUNG WOMAN WHO WOULD TURN THIS PLACE AROUND. IF YOU COULD CURE THE JOKER, YOU COULD CURE *ANYONE.*

AND THAT'S WHY I MADE YOU INTO *HARLEY QUINN*--I TOOK THEIR GREATEST HOPE...

...AND TURNED YOU INTO THEIR BIGGEST EMBARRASSMENT-- AN *INMATE.*

GTO

I DID CURE YOU. *AND THEN I BEAT YOU.*

YOU DIDN'T BEAT ME. *NAPIER* DID.

YOU COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT ALONE.

THAT'S WHY YOU KEEP ALIGNING YOURSELF WITH POWERFUL MEN... ME, NAPIER, AND NOW *BATMAN...*

STOP IT!

...BECAUSE YOU'RE *WEAK.*

AND NOW YOUR CHILDREN CAN SEE FOR THEMSELVES HOW *HELPLESS* THEIR MOTHER REALLY IS.

:GASP!:

GTO

ARGH!

WAHHHH!

JACK?!

UUUUGH!

DON'T LISTEN TO HIM HARLEY--YOU'RE ***NOT*** HELPLESS!

THE TRUTH IS HE'S ***SCARED*** OF YOU!

THAT'S WHY HE ALWAYS KEPT YOU AT A DISTANCE, BECAUSE YOU SAW THE THINGS HE WAS MOST ASHAMED OF--HIS ***HUMANITY*** AND HIS ***COMPASSION.***

AND THAT'S HOW YOU BEAT HIM, BY TURNING IT AGAINST HIM!

YOU ***SURPASSED*** EVERYTHING THE JOKER EVER DID--HE SAT BY ***HELPLESSLY*** WHILE YOU OVERTURNED GOTHAM AND BATMAN IN WAYS HE ***NEVER*** COULD.

HE'S ***HUMILIATED!***

HIS GREATEST ENEMY ISN'T ME AND IT ISN'T BATMAN--***IT'S YOU!***

JACK! LET ME HELP!

TELL ME WHAT TO DO!

RUN.

BWAHAHAHAHA!

NICE TRY, JACK. BUT I THINK YOU OUGHT TO LET *ME* DO THE STEERING FOR A WHILE.

TAKE

SMASH

ARGH!

JACK-- *YOU DID IT!*

GET AWAY FROM ME. *KEEP RUNNING!* I CAN'T CONTROL IT--

YOU'VE GOTTA KEEP FIGHTING!

NO!

HE'LL NEVER LEAVE US ALONE! HE'LL NEVER LEAVE OUR CHILDREN ALONE-- THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO END THIS.

NO!

TAKE CARE OF OUR FAMILY...

...I LOVE YOU, *HARLEEN*...

HAHAHAHAH

UUUUGH!!!

HE WON'T LET ME DO IT! I CAN'T PULL THE TRIGGER!

HARLEY-- TAKE THE GUN!

STOP HIM!

ARRRRRGH!

BLAM

KRRACK

WOOSH

HNNF.

THOKK

TRY HARDER-- YOU'RE MAKING THIS TOO EASY!

YOU'RE ENJOYING THIS?

ADMIT IT, WE BOTH ARE.

YOU THINK WE'RE THE SAME?

I'VE KNOWN ***MEN LIKE YOU*** ALL MY LIFE, BRUCE.

MEN WHOSE HEARTS BEAT STRONGEST AMIDST ***GUNFIRE*** AND ***CLASHING STEEL.*** SOME WERE ***BROTHERS IN ARMS,*** THE REST WERE AT THE END OF MY RIFLE. ALL KILLING FOR SOMETHING GREATER THAN THEMSELVES.

I DON'T KILL.

IF YOU DON'T HAVE THE CONVICTION TO GO ALL THE WAY, THEN YOU'LL NEVER BRING PEACE.

HOW DOES ***KILLING*** BRING PEACE ***TO GOTHAM?*** WHY DID GORDON HAVE TO DIE?

YOU'RE NOT A KNIGHT FIGHTING A HOLY WAR! YOU'RE A DEMON--JUST LIKE BAKKAR!

AND THAT'S WHY YOU LOST EVERYTHING-- ***BECAUSE YOU DARED TO ATTACK THE WAYNES!***

HAHAHA HAHAHA

YOU'VE GOT IT WRONG, BATMAN. IT WASN'T **BAKKAR** WHO DIED NEXT TO LAFFY...

...IT WAS **EDMOND.**

WHAT?!

WITH ARKHAM DEAD, BAKKAR'S PLAN WAS **ALMOST** COMPLETE...

ALL HE NEEDED TO DO WAS **ELIMINATE EDMOND.**

THUCK

"THEN HE COULD **STEAL HIS IDENTITY,** FLOOD THE VALLEY, AND START REBUILDING GOTHAM.

"EDMOND **BARELY** SURVIVED THE FALL INTO THE WELL. BEFORE HE DIED, HE LEFT A MESSAGE ON THE WALL--A MESSAGE IN HIS **OWN BLOOD...**

"...HOPING THAT IT WOULD ONE DAY REVEAL THE **TRUTH...**"

I AM EDMOND WAYNE

"...THAT BAKKAR WAS AN *IMPOSTOR!*"

ARGH!

SHUCK

THAT'S WHY I'M *ALWAYS SMILING,* BATMAN! BECAUSE OF THE JOKE I WAS TOLD IN EDMOND'S TOMB.

THAT GOTHAM'S GREATEST HERO IS *DESCENDED FROM CRIMINALS!*

THAT YOU'RE USING A STOLEN FORTUNE TO WAGE A WAR ON CRIME THAT *YOUR FAMILY HELPED CREATE!*

DON'T YOU GET IT, BRUCE? YOU'RE *NOT REALLY A WAYNE...*

AZRAEL IS!

YOUR REIGN IS OVER--I'M TAKING IT ALL BACK.

...FROM YOU AND THE REST OF THE *ELITES--*

BWAHAHA-HAHA!

WHUD

THOKK

NO!

CLICK

YOU WON'T DO IT.

YOU DON'T HAVE THE--

BLAM

WOK WOK WOK

GCPD

...

-SNIFF-

JACK.

SHE'LL BE OKAY.

NEXT ISSUE:

Black-and-white art for BATMAN: CURSE OF THE WHITE KNIGHT #7 by Sean Murphy

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Written & illustrated by

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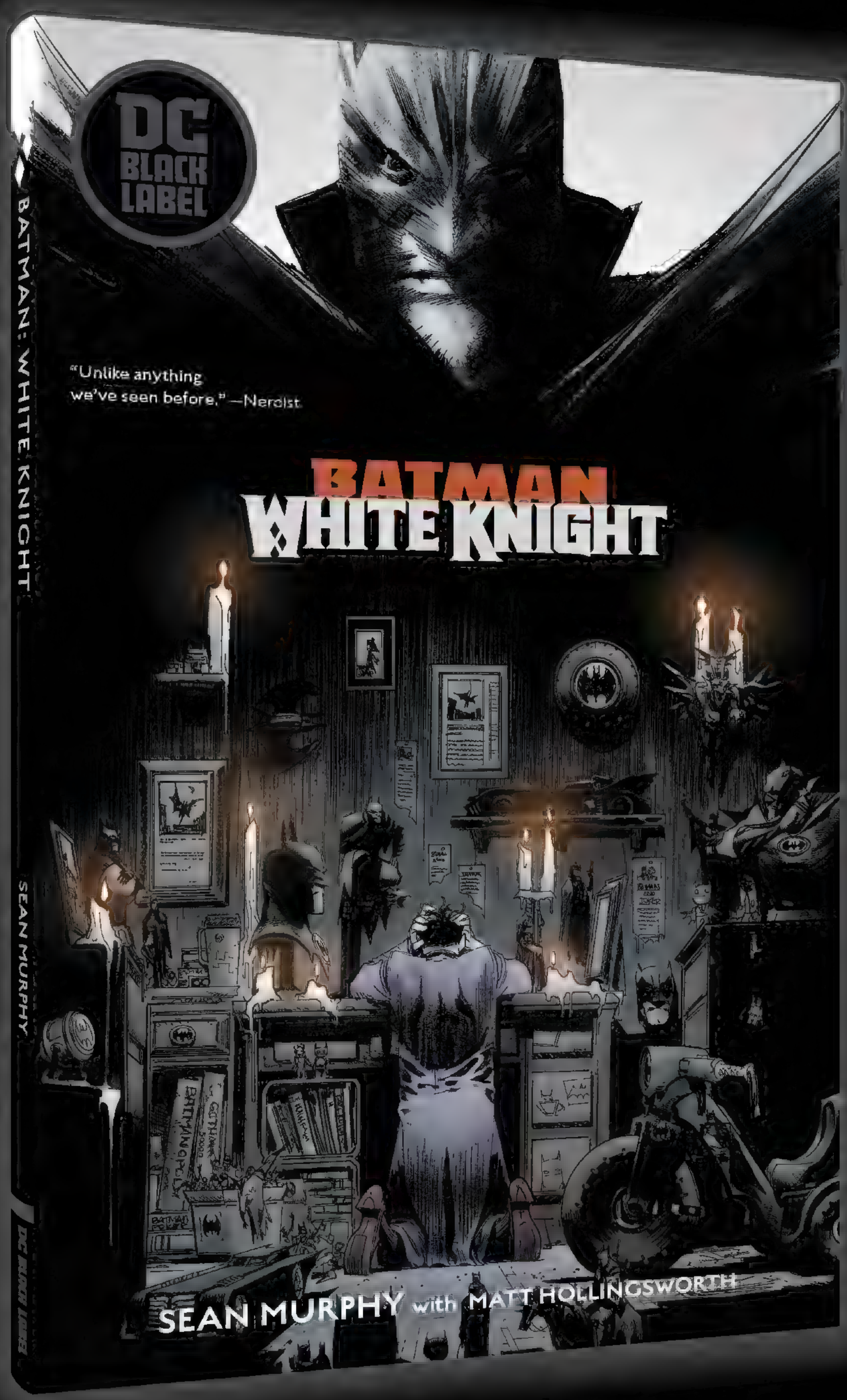

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AND CENTURIES OF LIES...

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A DEVASTATING SECRET
TO SHAKE BATMAN AND
GOTHAM TO THE CORE!

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